Optimum Utilisation of Refineries

*298. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the public sector oil refineries are not being utilized at the optimum level due to import of petroleum products rather than the crude oil:

(b) what has been the capacity utilization of public sector refineries during the last three years; and

(c) the steps being taken to utilize capacity of the refinery at optimum level?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) No, Sir.

(b) The capacity utilization of public sector refineries during the year 1999-2000, 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 has been 98%, 94% and 94% respectively.

(c) The capacity utilization is mainly lower in the North East refineries due to insufficient availability of Assam crude. Steps have been taken to allocate 1.5 million metric tonnes (MMT) of Ravva crude to Bongaigaon Refinery and Petrochemicals Limited, thus improving the overall availability of crude oil to the North East refineries.

Excise duty on bicycle parts

*299. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether bicycle industry in the country has opposed 4 per cent excise duty levied on bicycle manufacturing;

(b) whether the sale of bicycles in the country has gone down as a result of imposition of duty; and

(c) if so, the details of steps Government propose to take to improve the situation?